

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**
Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 19th September 2025

Bible Reading: Matthew 5.1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Reflection: UN International Day of Peace

This coming Sunday, 21st September, is the annual United Nations International Day of Peace. The theme this year is: Act Now for a Peaceful World.

As the official website states:

“In a time of turbulence, tumult, and uncertainty, it is critical for everyone to take concrete action to mobilize for peace.

From peacekeepers on the front lines of conflict, to community members, to students in classrooms around the world, everyone has a role to play. We must speak up against violence, hate, discrimination, and inequality; practise respect; and embrace the diversity of our world.

There are many ways to act right now. Spark conversations about the urgent need for understanding, non-violence, and disarmament. Volunteer in your community, listen to voices different from your own, challenge discriminatory language in your workplace, report bullying both online and off-line, and take the time to verify facts before you post on social media.

You can also speak up with your choices, opting to purchase items from socially-conscious brands, or donating to organizations that promote sustainability and human rights.

The United Nations also works in each of these areas, leading global efforts to advance human rights, fight climate change, and prevent and respond to conflict.

Let our actions for peace resonate louder than words.”

As the UN Secretary-General António Guterres adds: "Around the world lives are being ripped apart, childhoods extinguished, and basic human dignity discarded, amidst the cruelty and degradations of war."

Various churches and organizations, including the Church of England, have also called for this coming Sunday to be observed as a Day of Prayer for Peace in the Holy Land. Peace and an ending to the unimaginable suffering of so many people there are so desperately and urgently needed. Below you will find a new prayer written for this occasion by the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, who knows firsthand the dreadful situation in Gaza and the growing problems in the West Bank. All the church leaders in the Holy Land have been tireless in their call for peace and justice and in their moral support. Indeed we must not forget the Christian minority there who face daily challenges and difficulties.

It so happens that the 21st of September is the feast of Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist. Whilst there is no direct connection to the International Day of Peace, it is Matthew's Gospel that records Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." That passage, the Beatitudes, thus seems particularly appropriate for our Bible reading. If all these teachings of Jesus the Prince of Peace were followed ours would indeed be a more peaceful, just and loving world. For the spread and living out of those values of God's kingdom we earnestly pray.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

The Universal Prayer for Peace

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe. Amen.

A prayer for peace throughout the world

Lord, you have taught us that the world is yours and those who dwell on it. Hear us therefore as we pray for the life of the world; that every nation may seek the way that leads to peace; that human rights and freedom may everywhere be respected; and that the earth's resources may be ungrudgingly shared among all people. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(A Christian's Prayer Book)

A prayer for the Holy Land

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: In your mercy, provide for all those in Gaza and beyond who suffer from hunger and starvation, that they may be given both physical bread to nourish their bodies and heavenly bread to sustain their souls. By the power of your Spirit, bring a speedy end to this cruel war, the release of all captives, care for the sick and wounded, comfort

for those who have lost loved-ones, and the opening of a pathway for a just and lasting peace here in the very homeland where your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ministered during his earthly life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (*The Most Revd Dr Hosam E. Naoum Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem – August 2025*)

A prayer for Ukraine

Holy God, we hold before you all who live close to war and conflict; and all who live close to the threat of war and violence. We remember especially at this time, people in Ukraine and Russia. We pray for nonviolence and peaceful resolutions of conflict. Give us hearts of hospitality and sanctuary, forgive us all our hostility and hatred. Bring all people to the humanity you give us, and to the reconciliation and healing for which you gave your life. Strengthen us all to work with you to build justice and peace, reconciliation and healing, in our hearts and homes, in our streets, in all communities, neighbourhoods and nations. Bless all who live lives for the peace and wellbeing of others, and make their service fruitful. In the name of Christ. Amen. (*The Revd Inderjit Bhogal, Honorary President, The Fellowship of Reconciliation*)

A prayer for refugees

Almighty and merciful God, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger, homeless and hungry. Bless those who work to bring them relief; inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts; and guide the nations of the world towards that day when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice and of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Church of England prayers*)

A prayer for the Community of the Cross of Nails

Almighty God, you have committed to us the ministry of reconciliation of your Son, Jesus Christ; give us the confidence in your power to forgive, as your Son forgave us from the Cross. Enable us to be witnesses of your forgiveness at work and where we live. Unite us in a sacred fellowship to heal the hostilities we see, and give us the grace to love one another, rejoicing in this life together. Amen.

A prayer for all those affected by illness:

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle:

We pray this week for the peoples of Ghana and Nigeria..

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners in **Germany**:

in Petersberg: The Church Foundation St Petersberg (Halle);

in Pforzheim: The Evangelical Town Church Parish.

in Pforzheim-Huchenfeld: the Protestant Parish;

in Plauen: St John's Church.

We pray too for the partners in **Israel/Palestine**:

in Bethehem: Mar Ephrem School;

in Jerusalem: Musalaha;

St George the Martyr Cathedral;

St Mark's Church and Monastery; and

Tantur Ecumenical Institute;

in Ramallah: Arab Evangelical Episcopal School;

in Shefar'Am: International Peace Centre (House of Hope); and

St Paul's Episcopal Church.

We pray too for the partners in **Ukraine**:

in Odessa: St Paul's Congregation;

in **Russia**:

in Kaliningrad: the Evangelical Resurrection Church;

in Moscow: St Andrew's Anglican Church;

in St Petersburg: St Catherine's Lutheran Church;

and in **Belarus**:

in Minsk: the International Conference Centre IBB.

And we ask God's blessing on our own ministry of peace and reconciliation at St Martin.

Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,
Father Forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,
Father Forgive.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,
Father Forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
Father Forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,
Father Forgive.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,
Father Forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,
Father Forgive.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**